

# SALAD DAYS AT SHANNON . . . OR RABBIT FEED AT R.E.T.O.S.

The old man shook his head sadly, as he spoke with the experience of a long lifetime:

"Did you hear about —? He's better off ... At least he had guts if he had nothing else ... We have nothing and we're finished" the old man trailed off.

"They found his clothes on the bank ... They're still dragging the river for him", a voice adds.

"What do you think of the grub here", a forgotten farmer's son asks.

"Rabbit feed, you mean", the old man replied tersely, and, with what was left of his dignity, he nobbed out his last Woodbine.

"That was a great victory by the Limerick team", he continued, as he tried to shift the topic of conversation.

"Nonsense, 'twas only a bishop's bonfire". This interjection came from a young Clareman, obviously still a trifle jealous. He is afflicted with epilepsy.

A popular recording of a trumpet solo blazed over the intercom. A few well-known trumpet-players had their names bandied about. However, it was the title of the musical piece that really caught our fancy.

One young fellow suggested that "it sounded like the last post". Another chap thought "it could be reveille". Finally, one bright boy hit the jackpot. "Maybe", he said, they're sounding the retreat".

This conversational by-play was abruptly interrupted by the approach of the manager.

"Quick, boys, here comes the governor". The manager passed.

"Will you buy a shirt?" I'd seen this man before. "I'm selling a shirt", he continued. He was about fifty and nerve-wrecked.

"How much?" we chorused in unison.

"Fifty pee", came the quick reply.

"Why don't you wear it yourself", a voice seriously questioned.

"Well, I'm saving up for a headstone", the shirt man replied solemnly. The old man nodded understandingly.

"Do you know what he did in the chapel one Sunday?" The speaker was a young woman who

had befriended me. From Co. Limerick, with crudely cropped hair.

"That's him smoking his pipe", she elucidated.

"Well?" I ventured cautiously.

"Brigid was sitting next to him and ..." She paused in confusion.

"Anyway, I can't tell you, 'tis too dirty. The Mass was on an all ... I'd better not tell you, 'tis too dirty".

While I was pondering on all this trying in a manner of speaking, to separate the chaff from the wheat, my thoughts were shattered by the sounding of the lunch-time siren (Sorry about that, "siren" is not a nice word ... Let's try another ... How about "horn"? ... No, that won't do. My apologies once again. Let me see ... I've got it. "Hooter". That's better ... a sort of harmless, neutral word. Yes, "hooter" will suffice).

We sat down to our lunch and my mind drifted back to my work and my daily life ... Getting up in St. Joseph's Hospital at 6.30 a.m., ... in time to catch the 7.15 a.m. bus to Shannon ... Work starts at the factory of the Re-Employment Training Organisation (R.E.T.O.S.) at 8.00 a.m., and the management is strict on time ... Meeting my fellow-workers who also come from St. Joseph's, or from a hostel at Shannon ... Mental cases all (sorry, "psychiatric patients"), men and women, young and old.

Our jobs? To do some of the dirty, tedious menial chores charitably given to us by the other factories at the Shannon Industrial Estate ... cleaning out tubes, cones and pipes ... sorting screws ... for E.I., S.P.S., Lana-Knit, etc:

Our wages; A natural question. Would you believe £3.23 for a 40-hour week (It used to be £1.50, but we're in the Common Market now)... Only one consolation ... Like the farmers, we don't have to worry about income tax ... We must be grateful for small mercies, at least ... There are spaces provided on the pay packet for bonus payments, shift allowance, travelling time, etc, but on £3.23

Hunger begins to nag around 9.30a.m. and a ten - minute break for a cup of tea is allowed (no food) ... Notices abound ... On canteen door states

that the canteen is out of bounds except during breaks ... Another commandment on the factory notice board says that men must shave daily before going to work ... No notice yet on the Colgate ring of confidence ... A pity ...

The hunger is still around at 12.30p.m. when the lunch is served. (many of the workers keep going on pills and sedatives). Lunch is the day's highlight. There is little danger of anyone going astray ... one's place is given and fixed in the canteen, with each name printed on the appointed table. The lunch is cold and is already on the table. It is usually made up of the following: lettuce, tomato, a hard-boiled egg, with sometimes some crisps, diced vegetables or some brawn or perhaps luncheon meat. This is supplemented with two slices of bread and is followed by a sweet, which invariably consists of well-watered jelly and ice-cream

Another break is allowed for tea between 3.20 and 3.30p.m. Again, one cup of tea, with no bread. At 4.45 works finishes. Some of the workers return to St. Joseph's in Limerick; others go back to their Shannon Hostel and a few fortunate ones go to their own homes. As they leave, yet, another notice reminds them not to wander anywhere.

The bus journey to Limerick can often be eventual. However, few of the bored middle - class ladies who sit on the board of the R.E.T.O.S. would know anything about this. Frequently shouts of "Here are the workers from the Mad Factory" greet the R.E. T.O.S. workers as they go into the bus. These workers are also often called on to sing songs for the entertainment of the other passengers on the journey to Limerick.

But the return to work call broke in on my thoughts. I downed my cuppa and moved back to my work — bench. The stains of canon Sidney McEwan's well-worn tenor voice floated over the intercom as he sang "Suffer Little Children To Come Unto Me". A well-packaged commercial song, with a suitably angelic children's chorus. And I thought about my former workmate who had the guts and for whose body they were now dragging the river.

## O'BRIEN'S DILEMMA

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the average householder. However, if all the densely populated areas were taking I.T.V., R.T.E. would soon go out of business as an advertising medium. The majority of T.V. advertisements are for mass-consumer goods and services: foodstuffs, sweets, petrol, etc. Many of the "commercials" on R.T.E. are British made with Irish-accented voices "dubbed on". And advertisers are hardly likely to pay twice to get at the same audience.

It seems as if the most sensible (though not the most politically acceptable) solution is for R.T.E. to concentrate its resources on running a good envelope service of news, current affairs, local

interest and cultural programmes, educational material and to take, via suitable deals, programmes from the United Kingdom and elsewhere via the European link (Eurovision). Clearly there would be resistance to this from politicians, the Catholic Church, the Irish language lobby, etc. on the grounds that the country's culture was being eroded, etc. However, unless the Republic is prepared to spend a great deal more on its television service there is no other way out.

Another aspect of the financial problem facing R.T.E. is the rapid obsolescence of expensive pieces of equipment. Most electronic T.V. gear must be written off over a few years. Each new electronic break through means higher unit costs and high write-off rates. Colour T.V. has increased operating costs by a factor of 3 to 5 and made much of the old equipment obsolete.

It has now become obvious that R.T.E. cannot

afford to run a service comparable with B.B.C. 1 or 2 or I.T.V. It is pathetic for it to even try. Faced with this situation, it would be logical for R.T.E. to recognise its limitations and adopt a policy of selectivity in programme production with an extension into co-production with Britain and other countries.

This, then, is the dilemma confronting the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien and his Department. But has he the political weight and skill to bring about the necessary changes in Irish television? The time is opportune for Irish workers and their trade unions to join in this debate in demanding a better and more open television service. The Minister clearly needs some strong indication of the people's wishes. In this area the work of the multi-channel lobby needs to be supported and broadened if anything effective is to be achieved.

## THE CATHOLIC POET

In 1871, O'Donnell's second book, *Memories of the Irish Franciscans*, was published by James Duffy. In his Introduction, O'Donnell describes how he came to write the book:

*The origin of the following ballads is directly traceable to two sources of inspiration. When a lad, it afforded me an ever fresh, if subdued, delight to wander through the roofless and deserted cloisters of the Franciscan convents and oratories, whose venerable remains stud the broad fields, and cast their shadows over the legend-haunted rivers of Munster. With their story at the time I was but vaguely and remotely acquainted, but I at least knew that those ruins were the monuments of an Order which had rendered Ireland noble and abiding service in evil and calamitous days. Years, and perhaps distance, served only to deepen the impressions which I experienced while meditating amid the desolate beauty of Adare, or finding some reliable traces of the great Franciscan house which, according to local tradition, once dominated the Limerick flank of Thomond-bridge. Later on, the Rev. C.P. Meehan's scholarly and delightful book, *The Franciscan Monasteries*, came upon me like a revelation, and lighted up those grey chanel and slender arcades, not only with the cold illumination of fact, but with the warmer light of pathos and imagination as well. It was not until I had read Mr. Meehan's work for the fifth or sixth time that the notion of throwing into ballad shape the ecclesiastical and secular incidents which he so admirably dramatised, presented itself. I could not enhance the sterling worth of his labors, but, by using verse, as a popular vehicle, it might, I thought, be possible to render those labors better known and more universally appreciated.*

As in his first book, O'Donnell concludes his Introduction on a modest note:

*The result belongs to the future, and I am neither vain nor sanguine enough to attempt to anticipate it. I cannot claim a very high character for the following ballads, in as much as they naturally involved the manipulation of a serious mass of details, and that in treating these, fancy, imagination, and digressiveness had to be subordinated to the necessities of historic truth. At all events, I can honestly say that I have done my utmost to make the book what it pretends to be - the story of the Irish Franciscans enlarged into English verse from the nervous and fluent prose of the author of *The Fate and Fortunes of the Earls of Tyrone and Tirconnell*. May I be excused for indulging the hope that the volume will find sympathising readers in the ranks of my young countrymen, and be at the same time an act of tardy justice to the illustrious Order whose services and sufferings it feebly commemorates.*

O'Donnell repeats these sentiments in poetic form in *THE FRANCISCANS* the first poem in the book:

*Then to St. Francis and his brown-robed sons  
I dedicate, with love and reverence,  
This little book; and crave their benisons,  
Wishing it bore a higher, deeper sense  
Of what my heart would utter. May they spread  
And fill the land with their sweet influence;  
With loving labors vivify the past;  
Proclaim that ignorance is crushed and dead,  
Scatter those vapors ominous and dense,  
Till enmity shall kiss their feet at last.*

The writing in the collection of verse is not among O'Donnell's best work. The book contains some interesting poems, including one titled, *Limerick*, but the mixture of religion, history and poetry is not always successful. "Owen Roe", writing about the book in *The Shamrock* of February 24th., 1877 commented: ... "Memories of the Irish Franciscans, although open to the charge of being "dry", are nevertheless interesting;

## In search of . . .

JOHN FRANCIS  
O'DONNELL

Part Six

by Jim Kemmy

and may in some years to come be the only series of poetry by which our poet may be known."

Many more of O'Donnell's poems contain religious references. In the last verse of *Adare* he places his complete trust in religious belief and turns his face against rational and scientific progress:

*Heaven knows it all. We blindly move,  
Seeking solutions of our fears  
Ah, nobler consolations fall  
In rains of penitential tears,  
Through those thick hazes peace appears.  
We would be wise, we would be good,  
We would have heaven our single hope  
And yet insult that single trust  
With crucible and telescope.*

Another insight into O'Donnell's religious thinking is to be found in a letter written by him to Father Matthew Russell, S.J., on August 14th 1873, less than a year before the poet's death. This letter was published in the *Irish Monthly* of which Fr. Russell was editor, in 1888 in its sixteenth yearly volume. For some reason the priest had tackled O'Donnell on his Christianity. Father Russell gives the letter, though, as he states, "it mentions some sufficiently private concerns":

*7 Victoria Road, Holloway,  
August 14th 1873.*

*My Dear Fr. Russell,*

*You say, "I hope you are a good Christian". Well I have not ceased to be a Catholic. I go to Mass regularly; I do not neglect confession; my little girls (two) are at school with the ladies of Notre Dame de Sion; my eldest boy, of whom I have great hopes, goes to a Catholic school within a few doors of us, and I can answer for my wife that never better Catholic breathed.*

*Perhaps at this stage of my life such a protest as I am about to put in may sound ludicrous. Here it is, however. I have never - and heaven knows what inducements there were to the contrary - penned a line which, dying, I would be anxious to blot. That is the record of my life since you have known me. I am not ashamed of it, and I can imagine the pleasure which such a retrospect must - here is egotism run mad - give a priest of the Society of Jesus.*

*Believe me dear Fr. Russell,  
Gratefully yours,  
John F. O'Donnell.*

O'Donnell frequently links religion with death in his poetry. In one of his finest poems, *Last moments*, he slowly but skilfully builds up an eerie atmosphere of gloom and sadness inside and outside the death-room. Here are O'Donnell's descriptive powers at their best:

*"Plead for a Faith dismantled, not o'erthrown,  
Plead for a race not broken, if 'tis bent  
Plead for a cause not lost for evermore".  
(THE FRANCISCANS - J.F. O'Donnell).*

*The twilight thickens; and, forlorn,  
The hawk across the lattice flies;  
The purple-throated finches scream;  
The peacock from the paddock cries.  
The wind blows chilly from the west,  
Through tracts of orange vapour rolled;  
And broken lines of cattle stream  
Across the bleak, abandoned wold.  
Hark to the bell! 'tis curfew time;  
Kindle the night lamp. God! how grey  
The light gleams through the closing lids -  
Moon-lighted lilies. Let us pray.*

*At times, great footfalls labour slow  
Along the arched corridors;  
Old portraits beckon from the walls,  
Quaint faces gaze from open doors.  
In minute calms of rain and wind,  
The swallows whistle in the thatch;  
The chimneys roar, the gables groan;  
Trice shakes the weather - rusted latch.  
Abroad, amid the cloudy air,  
One star shines faintly down the bay.  
The angel of her spirit leans  
Across the threshold. Let us pray.*

*A blaze of amber splendour streams  
Around the couch from yonder cleft  
Of shadows cirqued before the sun;  
Her pulse is still; her soul is left.  
Chilly and white but glorified;  
The dead face from the curtained gloom  
Gazes, instinct with after life,  
Across the bright, wainscotted room.  
Put out the light; quench all the fires;  
Strew roses on her virgin clay.  
The presences of angels fill  
The house with terror. Let us pray.*

Like his nationalism, O'Donnell's strong religious feelings can be traced back to his Limerick childhood. During a controversy about the exact birth place of the poet in the *Dublin Evening Telegraph*, which also spilled into the *Limerick Chronicle*, in May 1905, Patrick Fitzgerald, 21 Richmond Street (now St. Joseph's Street), Limerick, who claimed to be O'Donnell's "nearest relative living", wrote a letter to the *Evening Telegraph*; This letter, which was reprinted in the *Limerick Leader* on May 29th, 1905, stated:

*Seeing by your paper of the 20th instant the dispute about the birthplace of John Francis O'Donnell, I, as his nearest relative living (being his first cousin) can give all the information required about him. Limerick is really his birthplace. He was born in Cornwallis-street. His father was a painter by trade, his mother being my aunt, and he was an only child. He and I went together as boys to Leamy's School, Hartstonge - street. His father died when he was very young. At the age of fourteen he entered as a clerk in Mr. O'Donnell's leather store. He showed a taste for poetry from his earliest years. He became a member of the Catholic Young Men's Society, which was got up by Dean O'Brien in Brunswick - street. Owing to some verses of poetry he wrote while in the society he came to the notice of Dean O'Brien, who had him sent to the Diocesan College, which was then in the Crescent, to be educated. Mr. M. MacDonagh was making inquiries about him from me about ten years ago, and I gave him all information he required at the time. I possess an old photograph of John Francis O'Donnell and his wife.*

Here we have many clues to the formation of the religious and nationalist character of the man.  
(To be continued)

# THE BANISHED

**'THERE ARE NO FANCY WORDS... ONLY THE REALITY'**

FRANK HAMILTON LIMBERS UP  
AMONG THE DOWN-AND-OUTS

It is not every day that a Limerick worker writes a play and succeeds in getting it publicly presented. Frank Hamilton, the twenty-three-year old reporter, who formerly worked as a messenger boy and factory worker, had his first play *The Banished* staged at the Royal George Hotel, on Monday, September 24th. The play, described as "a social commentary in dramatic form," was given a directed reading by the College Players.

The action is set on a derelict site near the Simon Community Hostel in Limerick, and describes the disillusionment of a young reporter. Hamilton uses the play to expose the hypocrisy of the forces of capitalist society in their treatment of the "Simon boys". The reporter, who appears to be based on a cross between the author himself and Peter O'Malley, a former *Limerick Weekly Echo* journalist, goes to the derelict site to find out what makes people drop out of society. John, a social worker, replies:

*Well, a lot come from broken homes, state institutions and more have mental problems ... many of the people have a history of being in prisons, orphanages and industrial schools .. and they cannot cope with the pressures of a highly industrialised society.*

The reporter asks if "the economic system is a contributing factor," and the social worker concedes: "Well .. unemployment causes many problems .." Following an interview with a priest, the reporter comments: "I can see one thing ... the Church tolerates the Establishment ... because the Church is part of it ... we are all part of it .."

The reporter next talks to "Solo," a young drop-out whose main aims are to drink and sing, and asks him about social workers. "Solo" replies: "... they're so confused by their University degrees in sociology and psychology that they haven't a clue .. they're like parasites ... living on the problems of people .. "I notice that social problems increase every year," is all the reporter can say without explaining why this is so.

Some exchanges between Cath, a "communist" social worker, and the reporter follow. "A priest told me that the Church was against exploitation ... but are women who go to Bingo exploited .. are children left hungry ... or is the rent unpaid?" the reporter asks. "Priests don't talk .. they preach at you as if they have all the goodness," Cath replies.

A policeman comes on the scene looking for "Solo," and the reporter questions him about his attitude to the "Simon boys." "... they're more harm to themselves than anybody else .. we get a

few complaints about begging in the streets .. One man (was) fined £2 for being drunk, but considering that it took two Gardai to lift him into the Patrol car you can write it down as a waste of taxpayers money," the sergeant states.

The next exchange has a topical ring as Cath tackles the reporter: "why don't you ask him about the winos who are beaten up in the Station," "If people have complaints against the Gardai there are procedures laid down .. it is possible that some of these drunks could give trouble ... and many of them can be dangerous,..." the sergeant counters.

And, inevitably, the frequently heard local response is once again aired when a passing man states: "That bloody place should be burned down ... Its brought but winos and bobos into Limerick ... we never had any of that until it opened ..."

Act three of the play is obviously based on the Newenham Street eviction of March 1973, when four old women were evicted from their home and the two local papers were "pulled" to keep the story out of their pages. The two off-stage voices used here are thinly - disguised versions of the one of the solicitors and one of the editors concerned.

The failure to publish the story leads to a clash between Cath and the reporter. Cath says: There are no fancy words ... only the reality ... and the reality is that the status quo will always be protected ... and it will never be challenged with bastards like you around" ... In his reply the reporter describes the role of the press in capitalist society:

*They fester on hypocrisy until they cannot be challenged and the irony is that we find ourselves protecting ... protecting false values for our very survival .. you whore of journalism .. you beguiling bitch ... we dramatise our minor tragedies .. and suppress our scandal ... we must protect the lies ... There is no freedom .. they .. them .. the order of things ... could not allow it ...*

The play ends with the drop-outs sitting around a fire on the derelict site. No political solutions to their plight nor to the problems of society as a whole are offered. The author appears to accept the inevitability of the present system.

After the play, a discussion panel and the audience engaged in dialogue about the play. The first speaker from the panel was Tom Keane, a former volunteer at the Simon Community Hostel. He said that the characters in the play were not confined to the type of people being helped by Simon but were typical of the many other people who were the victims of a society which exploited human dignity, and they could be encountered all

over Limerick city and throughout Ireland. He called for the "re-structuring of society" to alter this situation and said "the system must be attacked."

Bobby Hamilton, father of the author, then spoke from the floor and asked Tom Keane to explain the type of society he wanted. This contribution was an instinctive working class response and was the most relevant question of evening.

Tom Keane did not wish to be pinned down on his definition of a restructured society and merely answered that he wanted to see "a just society." Fine Gael, the major party in the present Government, also says it is seeking a just society. Before the author's father could press for a more detailed answer to his question, the uneasy chairman, Tim Lehane, skilfully steered the discussion on to a less difficult topic.

Most of the other speakers from the floor praised the play and condemned the treatment of the drop-outs. It was symptomatic of the prevailing paranoia that when the author, Frank Hamilton got up to speak he declared that he "was not a communist". When asked for a suggested solution to the ills of society, some of which he had described in his play, he stated that it was "up to each of us to do our own little bit".

Engels described the condition of most of the speakers and also the play's message when he wrote: "It is the essence of bourgeois socialism to want to maintain the basis of all the evil of present day society and at the same time to abolish the evils themselves". And the play itself? "*The Banished*," with all its faults of construction and cardboard characters, is a notable achievement. Frank Hamilton has exposed the ugly under-belly of capitalism, and the manner in which the press is used to serve the system. The claim of Arthur Quinlan, editor of the *Limerick Weekly Echo*, however, that Hamilton is a Limerick Sean O'Casey is an inflated one at this stage.

The author is weak in creating female characters. Nell, the prostitute, looked and sounded more like a Legion of Mary woman than a Dock Road dolly. Cath, the "communist" social worker, was completely unreal and behaved like a middle-class Presentation Convent teacher. Communists want to change society not to prop it up by confining their activities to "social work". All the cast worked hard, and Bobby McMahon, who played "Solo," achieved the best and most credible performance of the evening.

Seamus O' Cinneide, who reviewed the play for the *Limerick Leader*, stated: "If there had been a spokesman for the Establishment of the discussion panel .. it would have gingered up the discussion - and exorcised the general adulation of the author tone that prevailed ..." But what the panel lacked was not yet another speaker from the establishment to add to all the other establishment figures on the panel, but someone to give the socialist alternative. In the absence of a working class viewpoint, one of the present Simon volunteers might have contributed more than any of the other panelists.

Down - and - outs, apart from the general nuisance caused by their begging and petty pilfering, pose no threat to capitalism. Most of the Simon volunteers, who are usually well intentioned but politically naive young people, who invariably leave Simon after a short time, also pose no threat to the system.

When Frank Hamilton breaks through to a full political realisation of the labour/capital conflict he should write a better play. He might also atune his ear more closely to Limerick working class language. In this context, he could apply his own phrase, "there are no fancy words .. only the reality" more rigorously to his future writing efforts. Meanwhile, "*The Banished*" is an impressive first attempt, and much more will be heard of Hamilton as a writer in the years ahead.

Chile

## Nixon's Way With Allende

By P. O. Feithile

The killing of Chile's president, Dr. Salvador Allende and the overthrow of the country's democratically - elected Government has provoked widespread comment throughout the world. It seems that Allende was killed in the fighting during the siege on his place of residence by forces of the Chilean army.

When the history of the military group is written, it is certain that some, at least, of the credit for its success will be laid on the steps of the Pentagon and in the headquarters of the C.I.A. Since Allende came to power, the American Government has used sabotage, espionage, internal political agitation and economic pressures to bring about his fall. In the light of this background, Allende's overthrow cannot be considered surprising or even unexpected.

Dr. Salvador Allende was a far cry from the popular image of a South American revolutionary. A short stocky man in a conservative suit wearing thick horn-rimmed spectacles, he looked and was a child of the bourgeoisie. It was only in appearance that he was conservative: underneath the pin stripe beat the heart of a socialist reformer.

He was born in Valparaiso in 1908 and excelled at the school of medicine of Chile where he was active politically. He became a Marxist, believing that socialism was needed to cure the social evils of the country. He was jailed many times for his part in student protests and practised medicine. He soon found, however, that socialist doctors are not too popular in the medical profession.

He was elected a deputy in 1937 and in the following year managed a successful presidential campaign for a candidate of the popular front, after which he was made Minister of Public Health, a post which he held until 1940. In 1942, he founded the Chilean Socialist party and became its general secretary. He was an unsuccessful presidential candidate in '52, '58 and '64. In 1966, he was elected president of the senate, becoming the second highest - ranking political figure in the government, and in 1970, as a candidate of The Popular Unity, he was elected president. He came home on a Chilean Socialism platform, playing down his Marxism. He called for an end to an inflation and unemployment, nationalisation of

monopolies (such as the I.T.T. - owned telephone system) and of natural resources, extensive agrarian reform, reforms in the judicial system and the setting up of a People's Assembly to replace the two houses of Congress.

From the beginning, he knew he had not the support of all of Chile. "I am not the president of all Chileans", he was wont to remark. And he was right, he had won the implacable hatred of the upper middle - class. These he did not pretend to represent; his heart was with the squatters, the

In January 1971 Nixon declared of the new Allende government: 'We recognise the right of any country to have internal policies and an internal government different from what we might approve of ... I haven't given up on Chile or the Chilean people, and we're going to keep our contact with them.' As it happened, the two statements were mutually exclusive: by 'not giving up on' the Chilean people, the US government can claim a large measure of responsibility for the bloody destruction of Chilean democracy. An event which is being greeted with quiet purrs of satisfaction in official Washington and broad grins in corporate boardrooms.

The State Department insists that there was absolutely no US government involvement in the coup. Given the well-documented records of Washington's past interference in Chilean affairs, the burden of proof remains on them. But even if it is true that there were no bands of Howard Hunts running round with telephone salesmen, Washington certainly accepted one of the 'least exotic' of ITT's suggestions outlined in a 1970 ITT memo and repeated endlessly to top Nixon Administration officials by all sorts of businessmen thereafter: 'A more realistic hope among those who want to block Allende is that a swiftly deteriorating economy will touch off a wave of violence leading to a military coup.'

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unemployed, the workers and it was their lot he was determined to change. He nationalised hundreds of companies large and small and carried out the most extensive agrarian reforms on the continent. To set up a just society it was necessary that the petit-bourgeoisie tighten their belts and waive some wanted luxuries for the good of all. This they were not willing to do.

The American government made trade with the rest of the world almost impossible. Chile found it impossible to raise loans or purchase equipment. The U.S. cut off all direct or indirect aid, as did the United Kingdom, bastion of free speech and democracy. During his election campaign I.T.T. offered money to the C.I.A. to prevent his election. Their involvement in the lorry owners strike and walk - outs by various sectors of the middle class will not be known for some time. What is known is that they had a detailed plan, called "Plan Centaur", for his fall which had been in operation for two years. The U.S. also maintained a close relationship with the Chilean army which it supplied with military equipment.

On Tuesday September 11th tanks and planes moved in on the Moneda palace in Santiago. Regis Debray, the French intellectual and a personal friend of Allende, says that the president had known his fate for some time. He refused to arm the masses hoping to avoid a civil war. His enemies were not squemish. The fighting in Santiago was fierce. The exact number slain cannot be accurately given but runs into thousands; at least 5,000 have been imprisoned and a witch - hunt is on for all left-wing sympathisers and supporters. Everything indicates that a new fascist state has been born.

There is a lesson here. International capitalism, spearheaded by the Americans, will sabotage and seek to destroy any democratically - elected government hostile to its interests, even Allende's watered-down socialist one. And the fact that militantly sectarian organisations like the Provos continue to raise money and buy arms in America, the home of imperialism, for their "anti-imperialist" war in Northern Ireland is worthy of some consideration.

The killing of Allende and the overthrow of his Government once again shows that capitalism has lost none of its ruthlessness and determination when its survival and profits are even marginally threatened.

## MINES AND MONEY

The decision of the government to tax profits on mining operations, thus ending the mine companies' tax holiday and producing additional revenue for the State of, perhaps, £6 million a year for the next 20 years, was announced on September 26th. The fact that this announcement was made just three days before the Irish Congress of Trade Unions met to consider the question of another National Wage Agreement has already been commented on.

A brief look at the situation will put the matter into perspective. The Irish republic possesses the world's largest lead/zinc mine at Navan, the largest underground zinc mine in Europe at the Silvermines, the largest lead-producing mines in

Europe at Tynagh, one of the most important sources of magnesite barytes deposit in the world. The facts are not in dispute.

What is in dispute are exploration costs and profits. The mining companies are vague on profits; The Resources Study Group place the figure at £50 million. Exploration costs range from the companies' figure of £45 million over the past eighteen years to a figure of £6.5 million if the government nationalised the mines now. Companies inflate figures for the obvious reasons and development in the field of exploratory devices and techniques is conveniently overlooked. A popular misconception credits foreigners with the discovery of the mines: 6 out of 8 major mines were discovered by national bodies.

The mining concerns are understandably worried about the impending action by the Government. They bought seven pages of advertising space in "The Irish Independent" of August 30th in which articles written by executives of the companies appeared under the title of a "special survey". This is a particularly effective type of advertisement in that the reader is unaware that an article is an ad. The general theme was that mining was financially risky and not very rewarding. The effort was not unlike the "Save Green Shield Stamp" campaign.

It was pointed out that 2,000 men were employed (a factory work force). The average wage was given at £44; the R.S.G. put the average miner's wage at £27. These wages are taxed, profits are untaxed. The untaxed profit per worker per week ranges from £125 to £1431. It was noted that employment was in rural areas where alternative employment was lacking. State nationalised mines would provide the same employment at least. They will leave two developed ports, Foynes and Mornington and railway lines to the ports - mementoes of plunder. Mr. M.V. O'Brien of Tara assures the taxpayer that he has been lucky to be saved the cost of governmental exploration while being able to "share in the benefits of successful mining". About 2.5% of the wealth generating potential over the life of the known mineral deposits will enter the Irish economy. Elsewhere an anonymous correspondent states that "only a clear cut State policy on mining developments" will encourage foreign investment. But even by capitalist standards the Irish Republic is being short-changed.

The same correspondent refers to "a small sound industry" but in the article also states that "with proper encouragement it could well rank second to agriculture as one of the most important